Department of Classics

25 June 1981

WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY IN ST. LOUIS

Dear Mr. Newman,

As Curator of the WU Coin Collection I am writing you to ask if you would be interested in the display of ancient coins on a limited scale and as an adjunct to your Collection in the Mercantile Money Museum. As you know, the WU Collection has never been properly displayed to the public and even its research facilities are severely limited. For the foreseeable future this situation is not likely to change and hence this inquiry.

Anyone who has visited the Money Museum quickly senses the great amount of effort and planning involved in its most interesting and attractive displays. The Museum especially appeals to the general public and to youth, and its location in the center of pedestrian movement assures that it will be a popular and effective cultural landmark in the downtown area. Its dedication to the story of American money is also appropriate because this is the aspect of numismatics of greatest interest to the general public.

My sole interest in making this proposal is to bring a small portion of the WU coins before the public in such a superb environment and in so doing to contribute an added dimension of ancient coinage to the displays. On a rotating schedule the number of themes seems endless — gods & goddesses, famous figures in history, imperial portraits, Neoclassical aspects of modern coinage, and so on. Such a display would not be intrusive and would not require more than one or two cases at any one time.

If such an idea appeals to you, I shall be happy to discuss it with you in detail. There may be many good reasons why such collaboration is not possible, but from my viewpoint the concept of strength added to strength is most persuasive. I shall be most grateful to you for your consideration of this matter.

Sincerely yours,
Kevin Herbert
Professor of Classics

Washington University
Campus Box 1050
St. Louis, Missouri 63130
(314) 889-5123

ERIC P. NEWMAN NUMISMATIC EDUCATION SOCIETY

6450 Cecil Avenue, St. Louis, Missouri 63105

June 30, 1981

Prof. Kevin Herbert
Department of Classics
Washington University
Campus Box 1050
St. Louis, MO 63130

Dear Mr. Herbert:

Thank you for your kind expressions concerning the Mercantile Money Museum. You certainly are one who can appreciate the planning which went into its creatinn and that is why your remarks are so welcome.

The idea of exhibiting a case or two containing parts of the Washington University Classical Coin Collection is a fine one and we can work toward that goal for 1982. The conditions under which such a display would be made would have to be worked out to the satisfaction of both Mercantile and ourselves, but this raises only routine issues in my opinion.

I will discuss this matter with Mercantile and you can be thinking about what would be an appealing display. Thank you very much for your interest.

Sincerely,

Eric P. Newman

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Department of Classics

2 July 1981

WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY IN ST. LOUIS

Dear Dr. Danforth,

I did as you suggested and wrote directly to Mr. Newman with a proposal that a few cases in the Mercantile Money Museum be used to display coins from the WU Collection. He most graciously responded affirmatively and said that I could plan for such displays to begin in 1982. He did not foresee any problems in getting Mercantile to agree to this collaboration.

I proposed a series of rotating themes — gods & goddesses on the coins, Roman imperial portraits, neoclassical themes in modern coinage, and so on — as a means of adding an ancient historical dimension to the displays of Americana.

I am delighted, for now at last it will be possible to show the WU collection (a small part of it) to the general public in a superb setting & with complete bank-type security. This will come about because of Mr. Newman's generosity and vision. In my opinion this collaboration will make the Money Museum one of the foremost of its type in the nation, and in fact the most accessible of those I know of. I will keep you informed as things progress.

Cordially,
Kevin Herbert

Washington University
Campus Box 1050
St. Louis, Missouri 63130
(314) 889-5123

1124 Basswood Lane,
St. Louis, Mo. 63132,
4 July 1981.

Dear Mr. Newman,

I was most happy to receive your letter of the 30th and you are most gracious in your acceptance of my proposal. This will be the first time in the history of the WU Coin Collection that a part of it will be properly and securely displayed on a long-term basis. In fact, the last display of any kind was in the St. Louis Art Museum during the AIA-APA convention in December, 1973 — one case with some thirty pieces for a week, as I recall.

My own thinking is towards a balance of things Greek and Roman, linked perhaps by the historical development of coinage. If you have any preferences, just let me know.

The Money Museum to my mind is unique among numismatic galleries. The Smithsonian display is lifeless and overwhelming (an odd combination, but true, I think) and the ANS is excellent but simply too remote from the center of the city. The MM has life, variety, accessibility, and quality. As its fame grows at home & abroad, it will be recognized as one of the nation's finest specialized museums.

I have informed the Chancellor of your letter and the significance of this opportunity. I trust there will be no problems in the matter of conditions of display, and I will start thinking about some basic items and appropriate tags for them.

Sincerely yours,
Kevin Herbert

WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY IN ST. LOUIS

Office of the Chancellor

July 6, 1981

Mr. Eric Newman
Edison Brothers' Stores
Box 14020
St. Louis, Missouri 63178

Dear Eric:

Enclosed is a letter from Kevin Herbert to me. He expresses very well his enthusiasm for the opportunity to display the Washington University collection and his gratitude to you.

I add my personal thanks.

With best regards,

Yours sincerely,

WHD II

William H. Danforth
Chancellor

Washington University
Campus Box 1192
St. Louis, Missouri 63130
(314) 889-5100

Mercantile
Bancorporation
Inc.

Mercantile Tower
P.O. Box 524
St. Louis, Mo. 63166

MERCANTILE

RICHARD E. McGEE
Manager, Public Relations
314-425-8164

July 27, 1981

Mr. Eric Newman
c/o Edison Brothers Shoes
400 Washington Avenue
St. Louis, Missouri 63102

Dear Eric:

I have received a copy of the letter to you from Washington University. As you know when we opened the Money Museum, we indicated that there would be changes in the displays from time to time. I must yield to your good judgment as to whether the Washington University collection is significant enough to display in the Museum. From a Public Relations point of view, I believe it would be a good thing for us to do and I presume that Bill Sgarlata has no insurance problems.

I will be happy to discuss this further if you so desire.

Sincerely,

Richard E. McGee

RCM;nsj

ERIC P. NEWMAN NUMISMATIC EDUCATION SOCIETY

6450 Cecil Avenue, St. Louis, Missouri 63105

July 29, 1980

Prof. Kevin Herbert
Washington University
Skinker and Forsythe
St. Louis, MO 63105

Dear Professor Herbert:

Your numismatic enthusiasm is quite evident in the article just appearing in the POST-DISPATCH. Perhaps your prayers may be answered. We will have a numismatic museum opened this fall in the Mercantile Tower. We will in due course encourage applicants to exhibit their material. I hope you find our cases and our security to be unusual.

We plan to invite you to the opening. Even though there will not be a classical numismatic exhibit to start off, we expect to change exhibits from time to time and not remain static.

Congratulations on the completion of your A.N.S. publication.

Sincerely,

Eric P. Newman

ds

MILLERS FALLS
ONION SKIN
COTTON CONTENT

July 29, 1980

Prof. Kevin Herbert
Washington University
Skinker and Forsythe
St. Louis, MO 63105

Dear Professor Herbert:

Your numismatic enthusiasm is quite evident in the article just appearing in the POST-DISPATCH. Perhaps your prayers may be answered. We will have a numismatic museum opened this fall in the Mercantile Tower. We will in due course encourage applicants to exhibit their material. I hope you find our cases and our security to be unusual.

We plan to invite you to the opening. Even though there will not be a classical numismatic exhibit to start off, we expect to change exhibits from time to time and not remain static.

Congratulations on the completion of your A.N.S. publication.

Sincerely,

Eric P. Newman

ds

Department of Classics

Money Museum

14 August 1980

WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY IN ST. LOUIS

Mr. Eric P. Newman,
Eric P. Newman Numismatic Education Society,
St. Louis, Mo. 63105

Dear Mr. Newman:

Thank you for your letter of 29th July. I returned from a trip abroad a few days ago, hence the delay in my responding.

I look forward to the opening of the numismatic museum in the Mercantile Tower and to seeing the types of cases displays and their security arrangements. It will be an excellent cultural addition to the downtown area.

Thank you also for the kind words on the ANS publication of the Wulfing Greek coins.

Sincerely yours,
Kevin Herbert

Washington University
Campus Box 1050
St. Louis, Missouri 63130
(314) 889-5123

Don Hunstein

Glenn Gould

Introspection At The Keyboard

By Frank Peters
Post-Dispatch Music Editor

MUSICIANS live in the public's musical ear, and generally, I think, the things they say are not very enlightening musically, although they may be interesting for other reasons. "Great Pianists Speak for Themselves" (Dodd, Mead, 204 pages, $9.95) is an above-average example of the interview genre. The editor-transcriber, Elyse Mach, is a pianist who teaches music at Northeastern Illinois University. She has drawn her subjects out in a relaxed and helpful manner, without displaying her own opinions or assuming the sympathetic air of a "fellow artist."

Anyone who knows a few musicians personally will not be surprised to find that Mach's 13 subjects have little in common apart from having successful careers with their instruments and, perhaps, agreeing that it takes a lot of work to get there. (I put in that "perhaps" because one of the 13 is Glenn Gould, and nothing is likely to be unanimous in a group that includes Glenn Gould.) Alfred Brendel can speak in a detached, analytical way of himself and his art; Alicia De Larrocha is entirely personal, and her statements about music boil down to a few platitudes. Brendel prefers master classes to intensive private tutoring; Misha Dichter thinks the master class "is often simply an ego trip for the pianist."

Vladimir Ashkenazy, trained in Russia, disparages the system there for producing a lot of uniform technical whizzes: "Quick excitement is what Russian pianists provide, and it goes over well." John Browning, on the other hand, finds technical training in the U.S. "spotty at best. Here you very rarely hear young pianists whose technique is truly finished. So often the American students are not even remotely finished by the time they get to the university or conservatory, whereas in the Soviet Union most are ready by the time they're 15. There is really very little more to be done as far as approach and sound are concerned." Browning goes on to say skeptically about Ashkenazy that he "has said that he did not work very hard at developing his technique. Yet, from my observations, he seems to have put in a great deal of time on his technical skills and, for some reason, just doesn't want to talk about it."

It is hard to square what most of these pianists say with what we actually hear from them at the keyboard. Here is the polished, elegant Claudio Arrau, a great interpreter of 19th-century music, hymning the present age with all its troubles: "The questioning, the doubting, the nonacceptance of all the institutions and values that people have believed in for years are to me the marvel of our times." A very sombre view of modern society — "We're at the end of the Judaeo-Christian civilization . . . The decadence . . . forebodes a very dark, black period lasting a long time, perhaps many centuries" — is expressed by Rosalyn Tureck, whose clear and precise playing has been a model for contemporary Bach keyboard performance.

WITH GLENN GOULD there is no such difficulty in harmonizing word with deed. Gould's published statements have all been so brash, funny and unconventional that he does not get enough credit, I believe, for the reasoned exactness of what he says. To produce a shock, for example, one might extract a remark he made to Mach: "I don't much care for piano music."

But Mach lets him continue: "Well, I'm really not hooked on the instrument per se — on any instrument, per se. I'm kind of instumentally indifferent, I guess. Of course, if I hear a very scintillating performance I get great pleasure from it; I certainly don't mean to say that I don't get pleasure from listening to performances that involve the piano, but I don't get pleasure from performances *because* they involve the piano. And I think that that really has always been true. I've never been a piano buff in that sense."

Gould goes on to account, in an equally careful and reasoned way, for his refusal since 1964 to perform before a live audience; for his aversion to listening to music in an audience ("The last concert I attended was in 1967"); for his dislike of Stravinsky's music, his reservations about Mozart's music, and his admiration for Barbra Streisand's singing; for his 50-50 division of time between music and the production of documentary-dramatic broadcasts in Canada.

The Gould interview is worth the price of Prof. Mach's admirable little book. From it we get a consistent picture of an artist — and Gould is certainly a pianist of the first rank — who has intellectualized music as few other performers have, not on paper in musicological or mathematical or literary or philosophical terms, but in the ear. Gould, one gathers, wants to hear music a certain way and has swept aside the obstacles to its realization that are imposed by the hall, the instrument and the audience.

Not to speak of conductors and orchestras. "Basically, I don't like concertos," Gould says, "and the reason I don't like them is that I don't believe in a musical structure that derives its impetus from the spirit of competition."

FOR YEARS I have wished someone would write a basic book about ragtime that was not colored by nostalgia, connoisseurship or racial apologetics.

Edward A. Berlin has produced such a manual in "Ragtime/A Musical and Cultural History" (University of California Press, 248 pages, $16.95). Carefully, with musical examples, notes and references, Berlin produces the earliest 19th-century evidence of rag-type syncopation, and follows the evolution of the style through two decades of popularity that ended about 1918. Berlin's awareness of trends and development through the ragtime period; of the prominence of vocal music (those embarrassing "coon songs") in ragtime history; of the scarceness of rag "classics" in a sea of assembly-line mediocrity, and of contemporary criticism of ragtime, is especially helpful in an appraisal of what ragtime really amounted to.

Washington U.'s Hidden Treasure

By Robert W. Duffy
Post-Dispatch Arts Editor

IT WAS NOT too long ago that a lot of art-owning institutions made it their business to put up as many barriers as possible between the art and the public. The barriers were erected in the name of security, but the public suspected, often correctly, that curators simply didn't want the masses to have easy access to the assembled treasures.

Kevin Herbert is a professor of classics at Washington University and is also curator of one of the school's most valuable collections of objects. Herbert would like nothing better than to make those objects available to the public. But for Herbert, tight security is not an excuse for keeping the collection hidden away, it is an absolute necessity.

Herbert is curator of the university's coin collection, a collection that includes well over 10,000 objects made of gold and silver and other metals, everything from ancient bronze "pennies" that weigh a pound to delicately engraved fingernail-size gold coins. The market value of some of the coins is measured in the hundreds of thousands of dollars; the value of the whole is inestimable.

Herbert has horror stories to tell, stories that emphasize the necessity of extremely tight, sophisticated security measures. The stories involve not only armed robbers who sweep into museums, overwhelm guards, head for the coins, then vanish, but also "inside jobs," where thieves working in institutions make off with the small, highly valuable, highly portable treasures.

Stolen coins are more easily fenced than larger, better-known works of art, Herbert said. "Sometimes a kooky collector will buy them and keep them hidden away. They're not hard to unload in foreign markets. Sometimes they're melted down. Whatever happens to them, once they're stolen they are generally irrecoverable."

So Herbert is in a quandary. On the one hand, he has no intention of putting the collection in jeopardy; the coins are regularly kept in a bank vault for the purposes of security. On the other hand, Herbert knows the pleasure that viewing these objects affords; he wants to show off the university's property to more than a handful of visitors.

THAT PROPERTY is dazzling. In a couple of hours spent with Herbert and the university's collection, he showed only a handful of the coins but these were enough to indicate the depth of a resource known only to a few numismatists here but recognized internationally for its quality.

The objects in the collection represent about 2400 years of numismatic history — coins that date from the fifth century B.C. to modern times.

Their appeal is varied. Philip Grierson, in a book called "Numismatics," wrote that "coinage is . . . interesting to the historian because, to put it simply, it is part of the evidence. He may learn from it facts about the past that are otherwise unknown, and he will often find that it supplements or corrects his other sources of information."

Historians have learned to approach coins warily — often, the messages struck on them were pure propaganda, indicative more of what the issuing authority hoped conditions would be than what they actually were. Sometimes — in cases of coins that are made of debased metals, for example — economic difficulties can be observed. At other times, coins were used to "advertise" an economic resource of a particular area — wheat or grapes, for examples.

But coins also offer a real sense of contact with the past, Grierson says. "The professional historian, turning over crinkled parchments or yellowing pages and seeing the very ink in which words were written, has often the feeling that he is making personal contact with their authors . . . A numismatist obtains the same feeling and the same pleasure, less individualized but no less real, from touching and handling coins."

THE NUMISMATIST who brought this collection together was John Max Wulfing (1859-1929), a St. Louis wholesale grocer. He studied at the Smith Academy here, and after graduating in 1876, went to Germany for two years of further study. He returned to St. Louis in 1878, married Lillie Guye (who bore him six children) and settled into one of the big houses on Longfellow Boulevard in a neighborhood that was popular with burghers of German descent.

His biographical sketch in "The Book of St. Louisans" of 1912 indicates that in addition to his interest in Gildehaus, Wulfing and Co. and his family, the study of the past occupied a important role in his life. He is listed as having had memberships in the Missouri Historical Society, the Wisconsin Archeological Society, and the Archeological Institute of St. Louis. Herbert's research on Wulfing indicates that "he was not a professional scholar," but was "a good friend of . . . famous numismatists . . . and occasionally read papers at gatherings of learned societies."

In his years of collecting and studying and cataloging, Wulfing concentrated mainly on Roman Republican and Imperial coins. Herbert says that in the collection — properly known as the John Max Wulfing Collection in Washington University — "there is at least one but often many coins for each year of Roman Republican history" in which coins were made.

Wulfing did not limit himself to Roman coinage, however. He bought coins of the empire of Byzantium, and superb Greek coins that, Herbert says, "range over the whole of the Hellenic world — from Sicily and Magna Graecia to Anatolia, Syria and India."

The year before he died, Wulfing gave his coins and his numismatic library to the classics department at Washington U. There were additions to the collection in the 1930s and 1940s from other sources; now it includes not only the Greek, Roman and Byzantine coins but also medieval and modern examples as well.

"So we have here in St. Louis a resource that is unusual and highly specialized," Herbert says. He added that the German numismatist C. F. Boehringer, who examined the Wulfing collection after having seen collections of ancient coins on the East and West coasts, "ranked ours as fifth, after the American Numismatic Society in New York, the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, and the collections at Harvard and Yale."

ONLY TWICE in the dozen years of Herbert's curatorship have exhibitions of any of these coins been mounted, once for a local convention of numismatists, and most recently, in 1973, at the St. Louis Art Museum for the joint convention of the American Philological Association and the Architectural Institute of America.

Herbert, through the American Numismatic Society, published a catalog of the Greek coins in 1979, and the catalog should have the effect of increasing the awareness of the collection in scholarly circles. But he has a compelling interest in exhibiting the coins in St. Louis for the university community and the community-at-large.

Herbert has in mind a series of thematic shows — "Coins of the Hellenic Period," "Coins of the Republic," "Roman Portraits," "Roman Women." He believes that the shows should be compact; fifty or so coins in each exhibition would accomplish his goals. A rotation of exhibitions would be established in the Washington University Gallery in Steinberg Hall.

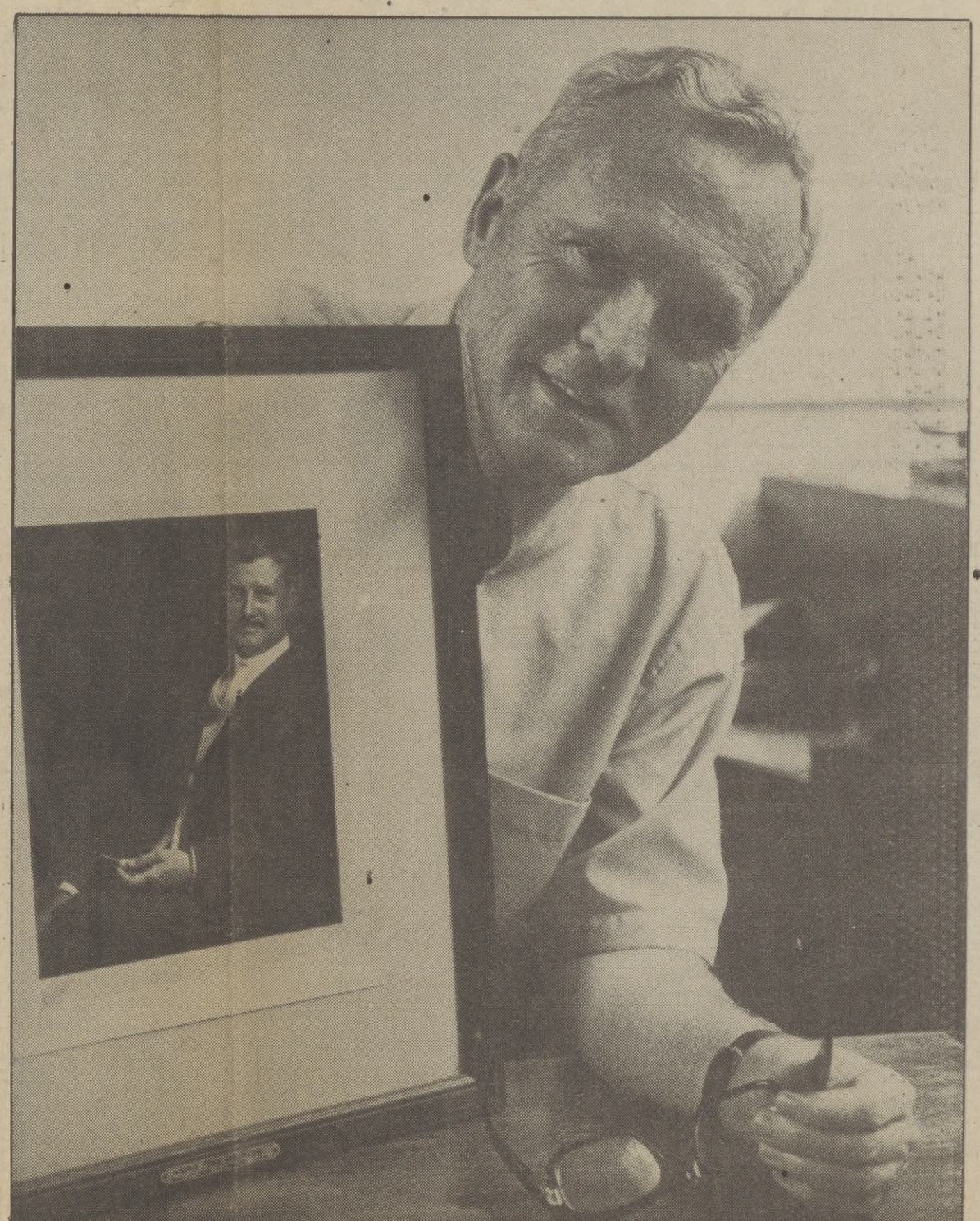
What stands between Herbert and the Wulfing Collection and the public is, ironically, money.

"We don't have any," Herbert said. "We have an art resource without parallel here and we just don't have the money we need to present it."

It would seem that bringing out a group of coins for exhibition would be simple enough. But showing the coins properly would require building special cabinets, for which Herbert has no money. Then there is another costly and unavoidable problem: Increased security in the galleries when the coins are on display.

So nowadays, Kevin Herbert, as he proudly tells the story of the collection and presents its treasures in private, speaks of having a mission.

Herbert is looking for a donor, another John Max Wulfing, someone willing to part with money in order to share with the public a very special manifestation of human accomplishment.



Scott C. Dine/Post-Dispatch

Kevin Herbert, professor of classics and curator of the coin collection at Washington University, is shown with a photograph of the St. Louis numismatist who built the collection and gave it to Washington U. in 1928 — John Max Wulfing. The photograph was made by one of St. Louis' most celebrated photographers, Julius Caesar Strauss (1857-1924).

One of the most beautiful of coins is a 10-drachma silver piece (left) issued by the independent Greek city-state of Syracuse, in Sicily, after its defeat of Athenian invaders in 413 B.C. It depicts the nymph Arethusa. "Signis receptis" ("the standards recovered") on silver coin (lower right) celebrates Augustus' triumphant repossession from Parthia of Roman battle flags and prisoners lost 33 years earlier, in 53 B.C., at Carrhae. Gold coin of Lucius Verus (above right) depicts the ruler who shared imperial power with Marcus Aurelius from 161 A.D. until his death in 169. All are in the John Max Wulfing Collection in Washington University.

Fellowship Program For Artists

A PROGRAM of fellowships, exhibitions, purchase awards and publications to aid living American visual artists and to provide wide exposure of their work has been announced by the Southeastern Center for Contemporary Art in Winston-Salem, N.C.

The program, to be called Awards in the Visual Arts (AVA), will offer fellowships of $15,000 to one artist in each of 10 regions in the U.S. The first fellowships are to be awarded in June, 1981. In June, 1982, an exhibition of the artists' work will be mounted at the National Collection of the Fine Arts in Washington. The exhibition will tour the country after its showing in Washington.

Fellowship recipients are to be selected by a jury of 12 "experts in the field of American visual arts." The jury will review the suggestions of a 100-member panel of nominators; the panel is to be composed of curators and directors of arts institutions, and artists and critics "who have a special knowledge and awareness of the contemporary artists in their area."

The aim of the program, according to Ted Potter, director of the Southeastern Center for Contemporary Art, is to "acknowledge and reward artists of stature who have not as yet received major national recognition." The Southeastern Center will coordinate the program.

Funds for AVA have been provided by the Equitable Life Assurance Society, the Rockefeller Foundation and the National Endowment for the Arts.

The address of the Southeastern Center for Contemporary Art is 750 Marguerite Drive, Winston-Salem, NC 27106.